the Govenrment that the restriction imposed by the Sri Lankan Authorities mainly affected the traditional sailing vessels traffic from Tuticorin to Colombo.

(c) The Government had strongly taken up the issue with the Sri Lankan Government. The Sri Lankan Government has intimated that due to security reasons they are unable to permit access to Colombo port by sailing vessels to enter Colombo port. The Sri Lankan authorities have offered alternative facilities to the small sailing vessels at Mutwal fisheries harbour, in addition to Negombo, Beruwela and Galle ports. A small delegation, arranged by the Ministry of Surface Transport and including representatives of vessel owners associations in Tuticorin are scheduled to visit Sri Lanka for further discussions on ways to resolve the issue.

India's Nuclear Option

896. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the reaction of Government with regard to the recent nuclear test conducted by the French Government which is estimated to be five times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb;

(b) whether Government have considered the question of exercising its nuclear option to meet the country's security challenges with the continuous development and testing of nuclear deterrent by the major nuclear power countries and guess of going nuclear by Pakistan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) In a statement issued on 15 September, Government expressed dismay over the recent nuclear tests and, *inter alia*, urged all countries to refrain from actions contrary to the objectives of the CTBT which is currently being negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva.

(b) and (c) The security situation of India is constantly under review, particularly in the light of developments in the neighbourhood and government will take all necessary measuress designed to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the nation.

PCOs in Delhi

897. SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of PCOs functioning in Delhi at present;

(b) what are the criteria followed for installation of PCOs;

(c) what are the reasons that sufficient PCOs are not installed on the roadside in the capital region;

(d) whether it is also a fact that some of the PCOs particularly outside Delhi Gate Telephone Exchange are locked at night thus preventing the telephone users from making distress telephone calls in emergency; and

(e) what steps Government are contemplating to ensure availability of sufficient PCOs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No. of PCOs working at present in Delhi are (as on 1-11-95) Local-19241 STD/ISD-3896.

(b) STD/ISD PCOs are provided to educated unemployed persons. For urban area the qualification is 10th Pass and for rural area, it is 8th Pass. Local Payphones are provided keeping in view the suitability and technical feasibility.

(c) Highways and other important roads falling within the jurisdiction of Delhi are reasonably covered by network or Payphones.

(d) Sir, specified minimum working

hours for private PCOs are 12 hours i.e. 0800 hr. to 2000 hours. However they may remain opened beyond these time limits. This applies to private PCOs outside Delhi Gate Exchange also.

(e) Though Delhi has already achieved the 8th plan target of having one PCOs for every 500 persons, provision of additional PCOs is a major thrust area.

Steps to Improve the image of Delhi Police

898. SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the last couple of months, a number of Police Officers in Delhi were caught red-handed while accepting bribes or on charge of dereliction of duty, if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) what steps Government are contemplating to improve the image of Delhi Police in the light of these acts of corruption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (PROF. M. KAMSON): (a) Yes, Sir. During the period from 1.9.95 to 31.10.95, nine police officials were caught red-handed, accepting bribes. Seven criminal cases have been registered against these nine police officials. Besides, this, administrative action against sixteen police officials for dereliction of duty during the above period has been taken.

(b) With a view to curbing involvement of policemen in crime and generating public confidence, the Delhi Police has been taking deterrent action against errant officials. This include disciplinary proceedings in all cases where policemen are found involved in crimes. Besides, Delhi Police are revising the training syllabus, both of initial training and refresher courses, to bring about the required behavioural changes among policemen. Briefing is also being given by senior officers to the members of the force through Sampart Sabhas. Emphasis is being placed on accessibility of senior officers to the public. A close watch is being kept on the conduct of policemen with doubtfull integrity, by the Vigilance Branch and the Anti-Corruption Branch of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Progress of Sethu Samudran Project

899. DR. D. MASTHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the progress made in respect of Sethu Samudran Project submitted by Tamil Nadu Government which involves excavation of a canal to connect Palk Strait with the Gulf of Mannar to facilitate passage of ships; and

(b) what are the reasons for the delay in approving the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY): (a) and (b) Due to financial constraints the Sethu Samudran Project could not be included in the 8th Five Year Plan.

Faulty Radio Telephone Service in Tamil Nadu

900. DR. D. MASTHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that radio telephone set up in several villages of Tamil Nadu have failed because of the poor audio-quality; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to provide telephones to all the villages in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Sir, the radio telephone set up in the villages of Tamil Nadu have been maintained in good condition and the audio quality is satisfactory.